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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/706,294	11/03/2000	Jennifer Elizabeth Pozniak	14541.1	6744

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WEBB, JAMISUE A

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3761	

DATE MAILED: 07/05/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	SS Applicant(s)
	09/706,294	POZNIAK ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Jamisue A. Webb	3761

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 April 2002.

2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-31 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-12, 14-21 and 23-31 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) 13 and 22 is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) Z.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) _____.

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. The amendment filed 4/10/02 has been entered and an action follows based on the amendment.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claims 23-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

4. With respect to Claim 23: the phrase “configured to engage one of said front panels and upon disengagement of said releasable joints, said exterior surface of said absorbent chassis in said front waist region...” is indefinite. It is unclear to the examiner what is happening upon disengagement of said releasable joints? Does this mean the side seams are configured to refastenable engage one of said front panels upon disengagement of said releasable joints? If so, then the word “and” should be deleted.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

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6. Claims 1-8, 10-12, 14-17, and 19-21 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Long et al. (5,624,429).
7. With respect to Claim 1, 8, 14 and 17: Long discloses an absorbent article (20) with a front waist region (38), a back waist region (40) and a crotch region located there between (42). Long discloses an absorbent chassis with laterally opposed side edges, and a pair of longitudinally opposed waist edges, forming a waist opening and leg openings, and a pair of opposed side panels located in the front and back waist regions (see Figure 1). Long discloses a first panel having a first side margin (90) that is permanently attached to the side edge in the back waist region, and a second panel that has a second side margin (56) that is releasably attached to the front waist region, using fasteners (60) and the panels being attached to each other, thereby forming a pair of side seams (see Figures 1-4). Long discloses the fasteners are permanently attached to the second side margin (see Figure 1), where the fastener defines a fastener edge (64) which has a length that is shorter than the releasable joint of the second margin (50) (see Figure 3).
8. With respect to Claim 2 and 15: Long discloses an outer cover (22), a body side liner (24) and an absorbent core (26) located there between.
9. With respect to Claim 3, 6 and 15: Long discloses the fasteners configured to releasably engage the outer cover (See figure 1).
10. With respect to Claim 4: See column 15, lines 41-52.
11. With respect to Claim 5: Long discloses that an attachment panel (78) can be used.
12. With respect to Claim 7 and 16: see column 13, lines 21-27.

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13. With respect to Claim 10, 11, 19 and 20: Long discloses fastener ears (64) (see figure 4) that are stretchable in the lateral direction (column 13, lines 21-27).

14. With respect to Claim 12 and 21: The examiner considers the hook and loop type fasteners to be a releasable bond.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

15. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

16. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

17. Claims 23-26, and 28-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Long et al. (5,624,429).

18. With respect to Claims 23 and 26: Long discloses an absorbent article (20) with a front waist region (38), a back waist region (40) and a crotch region located there between (42). Long discloses an absorbent chassis with laterally opposed side edges, and a pair of longitudinally

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opposed waist edges, forming a waist opening and leg openings, and a pair of opposed side panels located in the front and back waist regions (see Figure 1). Long discloses each of the panels having a first side margin (90) that is permanently attached to the side edge in the back waist region, and a second side margin (56). Long discloses the fasteners are permanently attached to the second side margin (see Figure 1), where the fastener defines a fastener edge (64) which has a length that is shorter than the releasable joint of the second margin (54) (see Figure 3).

19. Long discloses the claimed invention except for the second side margin being permanently bonded to the front waist, and the fasteners releasably engaging the first and second side margins together. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have the second side margin be permanently bonded to the front waist, and the fastener releasably engaging the first and second side margins, since it has been held that rearranging parts of an invention involves only routing skill in the art. *In re Japikse*, 86 USPQ 70.

20. With respect to Claim 24: Long discloses an outer cover (22), a body side liner (24) and an absorbent core (26) located there between.

21. With respect to Claim 24: Long discloses the fasteners configured to releasably engage the outer cover (See figure 1).

22. With respect to Claim 25: see column 13, lines 21-27.

23. With respect to Claim 28 and 29: Long discloses fastener ears (64) (see figure 4) that are stretchable in the lateral direction (column 13, lines 21-27).

24. With respect to Claim 30: The examiner considers the hook and loop type fasteners to be a releasable bond.

25. Claims 9, 18 and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Long et al. (5,624,429).

26. Long discloses the claimed invention except for the releasable bond of the second margin being three times greater in length than of the fastener edge. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have the length of the releasable bond being three times greater than the length of the fastener edge, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Aller*, 105 USPQ 233.

Allowable Subject Matter

27. Claims 13, 22 and 31 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Response to Amendment

28. Applicant's arguments filed 4/10/02 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

29. With respect to Applicant's arguments that the Long reference does not disclose side panels that define a waist opening and a pair of leg openings: Applicant has claimed that the side

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panels extend outward from and between the side edges of the absorbent chassis to define a waist opening and a pair of leg openings. It is the examiner's position that the side panels of Long extend from the back waist region and attach to the front waist region, and therefore forming/defining the waist opening and leg opening. The side panel of Long is also capable of attaching to the very end of the side edge (at the periphery) of the front portion, so that there is a gap between the front waist portions and back waist portion, and therefore the side panel being part of the waist opening edge and leg openings' edges. Therefore it is the examiner's position that Long does disclose the side panels defining extending outward from and between the side edges of the absorbent chassis to define a waist opening and a pair of leg openings. Rejection stands as stated above.

30. With respect to Applicant's argument that Long does not disclose a releasable joint length that is greater than the fastener length. The claim states that the fastener defines a fastener edge length, which the examiner considers to be 64 in Figure 3 and 4, the side panel clearly decreases in length, therefore the edge of region 50 is greater than the edge, 64, which is the fastener edge length. Rejection stands as stated above.

31. With respect to Applicant's arguments that the applicant is unclear how Long discloses the releasable joint length that is at least two times greater than the fastener edge length: The examiner assumes the fasteners are drawn to scale, and therefore, by doing a simple measurement with a ruler, it is clear that the edge of region 50 is twice as long as the edge 64. See Figure 3.

32. With respect to Applicant's arguments that Long, does not disclose a pair of side seams, see rejection above for further clarification.

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33. With respect to Applicant's arguments that it is not obvious to rearrange parts without any motivation: Long discloses the use of two panels, one of which is attached to the back waist region, one of which is attached to the front waist band, and the two panels attached together in the middle. In the embodiment in the pictures long, discloses the attachment of the two panels together is permanent and the attachment of panel to the front waist band is releasable. Therefore one of ordinary skill in the art would have to just switch the two fasteners. Furthermore, Long discloses a panel is permanently attached to one or more waist regions, therefore provides motivation that the a panel can be permanently attached to both the front waist and rear waist region. Therefore it is the examiner's position that it well within the skill of one of ordinary skill in the art, to switch the bonds.

34. With respect to Applicant's arguments with the result effective variable: See new rejection above.

Conclusion

35. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. VanGompel et al (6,030,373), Ando (5,370,634), Toyoda et al. (5,916,207), Pozniak et al. (6,045,543), Fries et al. (5,549,592), Zehner et al. (5,605,735), and Suprise et al. (5,899,896) disclose side edges with side margins containing releasable and permanent bonds.

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Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jamisue A. Webb whose telephone number is (703) 308-8579. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (7:30 - 4:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Dennis Ruhl can be reached on (703)308-2262. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 872-9302 for regular communications and (703) 872-9303 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1148.

jaw *Su*
July 2, 2002

Aaron J. Lewis
Aaron J. Lewis
Primary Examiner